

## Activities/Critical Thinking Questions/Research Suggestions

### *The Global Economy: Connecting the Roots of a Holistic System*

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## Chapter 5. The Economic Globalization Puzzle: Ten Pieces

### Section 5.1 An Introduction to Economic Globalization

#### 1. Introduction

- a. Write a story or a play with a diverse cast of characters to describe economic globalization.
- b. Do you think economic globalization is inevitable? Explain your position.
- c. Have you benefitted or not benefitted from economic globalization? Explain.
- d. Why do you think large corporations and state enterprises are targeting local, self-reliant and independent national economies with managed capitalism for integration into the world economy?
  1. Conduct research to find examples.
  2. Are they successful?

### Section 5.2 Puzzle Piece #1: A Reduction of Local Communities and Self-Reliance

#### 1. From Self-Reliance to Integration

- a. Conduct research and find examples of how people and corporations holding a modern ideology and practicing capitalist principles have transformed those living in self-reliant, local communities to integration into the global economy.
  1. Tell the story of those making the shift.
  2. Did they make the shift willingly or were pressured to do so?

### Section 5.3 Puzzle Piece #2: Economic Growth

#### 1. Growth

- a. Conduct your own survey. Listen to newscasts or read articles in business magazines/newspapers/websites and cite how many times they list growth as an answer to economic woes. Pull all your research together and make a graph or chart to show your results.

### Section 5.4 Puzzle Piece #3: The Promoting Network

#### 1. Consumerism and Advertising

- a. Write a story about the way you have been (or have not been) pulled into consumerism. Why do you think you have acted this way?
- b. Find examples and write about how consumerism is an important part of your daily life.
- c. The author states "If the consumer isn't pleased, the product is disposable." Do you agree with this conclusion? Find examples of this concept or argue against it.

#### 2. Media

- a. Conduct research to find examples of how the media companies shape consumer behaviors and ideas.
- b. What behaviors and ideas are media companies trying to promote with their campaigns?
- c. Describe three of your favorite commercials. Why are they effective?

### 3. Education

- a. Do you think the right to free, public education is being eroded in countries around the world? Find examples to support your conclusion.
- b. What two points does the author make when she states that education is a supporter of consumerism?
- c. Do you agree or disagree with these two points? Explain your position.
- d. Find examples in your school to support or repudiate these conclusions.

## **Section 5.5 Puzzle Piece #4: Making the Rules of Economic Globalization: The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)**

### 1. Bretton Woods Conference

- a. Conduct research to find out more about the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944. This would be an interesting group project with different students researching different countries. Students may debate the different agendas of the countries in attendance.
- b. What countries attended? Which important ones did not?
- c. What was the agenda of each of the countries?
- d. What were the results of the conference?
- e. Which countries benefitted? Which countries did not?
- f. What role did John Maynard Keynes play at the conference? Harry Dexter White?

### 2. The World Bank

- a. Research several projects financed by the World Bank in the different historical time periods described in your book.
  1. What was the overall purpose of the projects?
  2. Who benefitted from these projects?
- b. Conduct additional research to see if any small-scale projects were implemented during this period.
  1. Would the World Bank have financed them? Why or why not?
- c. Create your own small-scale project that might have been financed by the World Bank and implemented in a periphery country.
  1. Who would have benefited from this project?
  2. Why weren't these small-scale projects implemented?
- d. What happens to development when small projects are ignored?

### 3. International Monetary Fund

- a. Do you think the policies of the IMF were/are fair? Who benefits from these policies?
- b. In recent years, why do you think that the IMF pulled back from its long-time recipe of enforced austerity and mandatory market opening? Conduct additional research to find an answer to this question.
- c. Do you think that the World Bank and IMF policies have helped or hurt middle and periphery countries? Give examples to support your conclusions.
- d. Imagine you are IMF President Christine LaGarde. What policies would you implement at the IMF? This could be a group project in which pairs of students each design different IMF policies.
- e. Who do you think makes the rules for the global economy?
  1. How would you describe these rules in a short sentence?

## **Section 5.6 Puzzle Piece #5: Free Trade and the World Trade Organization**

### 1. Free Trade and the WTO

- a. Make rules for a world trade organization that would be fair for all nations. Is this possible?
- b. Conduct research to find WTO rulings in different cases that were brought before the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB). Who won and why?

- c. Conduct research to find different cases in which the rules of the WTO override national laws. What are the consequences of this precedent?
- d. Set up a mock WTO, complete with the DSB, existing rules, and different countries (both core, middle, and periphery) involved in free trade. Either conduct research or create different cases to bring before the WTO.
  - 1. How would the WTO rule in these cases?
  - 2. What are the consequences of these rulings?
  - 3. This project could also be implemented using the conclusion found in 1a – with the rules of a “fair” world trade organization as designed by the students. (this should be a very interesting project!)

## 2. TRIPS

- a. Conduct research to find different ways in which intellectual property is beneficial and or detrimental to society.
- b. Design your own rules that you think would more fairly protect intellectual property.

## 3. Critics of Free Trade

- a. Do you think the nations of East Asia have used the U.S.’s position of free trade to advance their interests?
  - 1. Have they been successful? If so, how?
- b. Do you think the statements by Hartmann and Kuttner could be true?
  - 1. Could the policies of free trade promoted by politicians and the mass media actually hurt the vast majority of Americans?
  - 2. If so, how could this happen?
- c. Are you a critic or supporter of free trade? Explain your position.
- d. Organize a debate between free trade and critics of free trade. Each student could research a particular position – one pro and one con. The debate could be a series of smaller debates between these different positions.

### **Section 5.7 Puzzle Piece #6: Privatization and Commodification**

#### 1. Privatization

- a. What lessons can be learned from the Schmeiser v. Monsanto case?
- b. If you were the Schmeiser family, how would you have handled the situation?
- c. If you were Monsanto, how would you have handled the situation?

#### 2. Privatization

- a. Conduct research to find different example of the privatization of previously public ownership in your local community or state.
- b. Conduct research to find out more about the commodification of water into bottled water.
- c. Who owns the water in your locality? If your water is not privatized, are there any plans to do so?
- d. If you don’t agree with the privatization agenda, what can you do to prevent the privatization of water (or other privatization efforts) in your local community?

### **Section 5.8 Puzzle Piece #7: Concentration of Power: Multinational Corporations and State Enterprises**

#### 1. Multinational Corporations

- a. Is turning to MNCs for more jobs the answer to unemployment in the global economy? Explain.
- b. Conduct research and think of ways to create more jobs that pay a good wage in your state or country.
- c. If you think that global corporations have too much influence and power, what can you and others do to curb their influence and power?

### **Section 5.9 Puzzle Piece #8: Specialization**

### 1. Specialization

- a. Tell a story of how you or someone you know have had or has a very specialized job.
  1. What are your feelings about this job?
- b. How does specialization affect you and your everyday life?
- c. Conduct research to find out if farming has become specialized in your local community.
  1. Are farmers' markets a form of specialization?

### **Section 5.10 Puzzle Piece #9: Squeeze Labor**

#### 1. Outsourcing

- a. Interview a person whose job has been outsourced.
  1. How does s/he feel about what has happened?
  2. Devise a list of questions to ask him/her before the interview.
  3. It might be a good idea for two people to conduct the interview together.
- b. Have any jobs been outsourced in your local community?
  1. What jobs have been outsourced?
  2. Where did they go?
  3. What has been the impact on your local community?
- c. Devise a diagram or chart to show all the factors that affect a local community when jobs are outsourced. (show the effect of lost income, lost taxes, higher social service costs, etc.)

### **Chapter 5.11 Puzzle Piece #10: Military Hegemony**

1. Check chapter 2 for activities related to colonialism and imperialism.
2. Military Power
  - a. Interview former military personnel about their experiences in the military during the period 1990-present. Examples of some questions you may ask:
    1. What were your duties?
    2. Where were you stationed? Why were you stationed there?
    3. Do you think your mission was worthwhile? Why?
    4. Do you think your mission helped to keep Americans safer?
  - b. Conduct research into the bases that the United States occupies around the world. Find out the cost, why they are there, and other questions.
  - c. Do you think the U.S. military is oversized and needs to be reduced? What would be the consequences of this reduction on the U.S. and the world? Explain.